



STATE OF DELAWARE  
**OFFICE STATE FIRE MARSHAL**

Delaware Fire Service Center  
1537 Chestnut Grove Rd.  
Dover, DE 19904-1610  
Telephone: (302)-739-4394



**DATE:** January 12, 2004

**TO:** All Delaware licensed fire protection contractors

**SUBJECT:** Reminder – False Fire Alarm Law

The Delaware State Fire Marshal wants to remind all Delaware licensed fire protection contractors of the **False Fire Alarm Law** that took effect on **January 1, 2004**. An owner or occupant of a property within the State of Delaware that has a fire alarm system that falsely activates more than three times in a given year will be held responsible and fined.

In an effort to reduce thousands of false fire alarms throughout the State, a major task was undertaken by a committee of fire service representatives, alarm company officials, the Delaware Volunteer Firemen's Association, and the State Fire Marshal's Office. A bill was drafted and passed in Dover to institute a penalty system for those property owners that do not properly maintain their fire alarm systems.

State Fire Marshal Willard F. Preston III states that this Law will drastically lower the number of false alarms that the fire service in Delaware responds to each year. In addition, Marvin C. Sharp, president of the Delaware Volunteer Firemen's Association, states that reducing the false alarms will allow the fire service to limit the number of times firefighters are forced to leave their homes and rush to a fire call which is a direct result of a faulty alarm system.

Law enforcement officers from the State Fire Marshal's Office will enforce this new law. Once a property is identified as a nuisance, officers will issue the owner of the property a civil penalty. Civil penalties for faulty fire alarm systems will start at \$100.00 and progress upward for repeated offenses.

Additionally, the law mandates that fire protection contractors, upon the installation of a new fire alarm signaling system, furnish the owner with written operating instructions and training to enable the owner to use the system properly and also to notify the owner of the provisions of the law. A "Record of Completion" form, designated by the Office of the State Fire Marshal, containing owner and system information shall be submitted by the fire alarm contractor to the State Fire Marshal for all new fire alarm signaling systems.

The law further prohibits any person from conducting any test or demonstration of a fire alarm signaling system without first contacting the appropriate fire dispatch center and fire alarm signaling monitoring company.

Fire alarm signaling monitoring companies has responsibilities too. The law requires that the monitoring company direct the call reporting the fire alarm signal to the appropriate dispatch center, and for providing the dispatch center with accurate location information. All fire alarm monitoring companies are to maintain a current contact list of 3 representatives or designees of the owners of which 1 will respond to the premises within 30 minutes to assist the fire department in gaining access to the building. The fire alarm signaling monitoring company shall have current contact information for each representative or designee of the owner and the contact list must be updated on an annual basis. Where an owner is unable to provide a minimum of 3 representatives or designees who can respond within 30 minutes, a lock box containing keys for fire department access is to be provided as specified in the State Fire Prevention Regulations.

Anyone wishing a copy of the law may visit the Delaware State Fire Marshal's website [www.delawarestatefiremarshal.com](http://www.delawarestatefiremarshal.com) or stop by one of the State Fire Marshal's division offices.